



How to use Islam to boost your productivity



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful





Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like
to present to you these compiled notes that we have
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

Our notes are compiled by the AMAU Admin team
and have not been comprehensively checked
by a teacher.

If you find any errors or corrections that need
to be made, kindly inform us via our email
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May Allah make our paths toward seeking
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts
with sincerity and gratefulness
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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Glossary



جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu
Allah the Most Exalted



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam
Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him



رضي الله عنه | RadiAllahu `anhu
May Allah be pleased with him



رحمه الله | Rahimahullah
May Allah have mercy upon him

Introduction

Chapter One

Productivity is one of those buzzwords that is everywhere nowadays. The self-help/productivity industry in the US alone is worth around 10 billion dollars, and there is no shortage of books, videos, coaches and other media teaching productivity.

Allāh ﷻ sent this Qur’ān as a guidance for mankind to correct our religion, but also to correct our worldly affairs.

1

فَاتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“So Allāh ﷻ gave them the reward of this world and the good reward of the Hereafter. And Allāh loves the doers of good.”

Surah Aal-e-Imraan 148

Success related to the Hereafter and this world are in the hands of Allah, as He said:

2

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

“Whoever desires the reward of this world - then with Allāh is the reward of this world and the Hereafter. And ever is Allāh Hearing and Seeing.”

Surah An-Nisa’ 134

3

فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ * وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ * أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

"And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share. * But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire." * Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allāh is swift in account."

Surah Al-Baqara: 202

The Value of Time in Islam

Time is our most valuable commodity.

Allāh ﷻ said:

1

وَالْعَصْرِ * إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ • إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

“By time indeed mankind is at a loss except those who believe and do good deeds and advising one another to truth and advising one another to patience.”

Surah Al Asr: 1-3

Allāh ﷻ swore by Time and He does not swear by something that is not significant. Allah also swore by Time in other places in the Qur’an like in Surat Al-Fajr and Surat Al-Layl.

Ibn ‘Abbas رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

2

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ
"Two blessings that many people are deceived into losing: health and free time."

Sahih Al Bukhari 6049

Al-Hasan al-Basri رحمته الله said:

3

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ أَيَّامٌ؛ فَإِنْ ذَهَبَ يَوْمٌ ذَهَبَ بَعْضُكَ
"O son of Adam! you are nothing but a number of days. If a day goes a part of you goes."

Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba 7/237

Ibn-ul-Jawzi رحمته الله said:

4

ينبغي للإنسان أن يعرف شرف زمانه، وقدر وقته، فلا يضيع منه لحظة في غير
قُرْبَةٍ، ويُقدِّم فيه الأفضل فالأفضل من القول والعمل
"it is befitting for a person to know the honour of his lifespan and the value of his time, so he does not waste even a moment of it without doing an act of worship, and he puts forward the best and the best of speech and action."

Sayd Al Khatir

This was summarised in a beautiful line of poetry:

5

والوقتُ أنْفُسُ ما عُنيتَ بحفظه وأراه أسهلَّ ما عليك يضيعُ
"Time is the most precious of that which you guard; and I know it to be the easiest thing you can lose."

Thayl Tabaqat Al-Hanabila (1/281)

The Value of Hard Work in Islam

Allāh ﷻ said:

1

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى
"And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives"

Surah An-Najm: 39

2

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا
"But whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer - it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by Allāh]."

Surah Al-Isra: 19

3

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ
"And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allāh is with the doers of good."

Surah Al-Ankaboot: 69

In the above verse, the word Jihad means to strive and excel in the path of Allah. This shows the importance and value of hard work in Islam. This mentality of hard work comes when a person knows how little time they actually have.

The Concept of Barakah

Productivity in Islam comes back to the topic of Barakah. Barakah is having one's time and hard work being blessed by Allah. The Prophet ﷺ was able to achieve a lot in very little time.

Ar-Raaghib al-Aṣḥaḥānī رحمه الله said:

1

البركة هي ثبوت الخير الإلهي في الشيء...والمبارك ما فيه ذلك الخير

“Barakah is the for divine goodness to be established in something and the mubaarak is the thing in which this goodness exists.”

The Message Of Polytheism And Its Manifestations (149)

Barakah is an important concept. It is the idea that two people might put in the same effort and time in doing the same task, but one achieves much more than the other because of the divine goodness that Allah places.

Allāh ﷻ said:

2

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

"And if only the people of the cities had believed and feared Allāh , We would have opened upon them blessings from the heaven and the earth; but they denied [the messengers], so We seized them for what they were earning."

Surah Al-A'raf: 96

Two things are required to bring Barakah into something: ***Iman and Taqwa.***

Iman encompasses the beliefs in your heart, and actions that you do with your heart, tongue, and limbs.

The most comprehensive definition of Taqwa is the statement of Ṭalq ibn Ḥabeeb:

3

الْعَمَلُ بِطَاعَةِ اللَّهِ، عَلَى نُورٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ، رَجَاءَ ثَوَابِ اللَّهِ، وَتَرْكِ مَعَاصِي اللَّهِ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ، مَخَافَةَ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ

“Acting in obedience to Allāh, upon a light of guidance from Allāh, hoping for Allāh's reward; and leaving disobedience to Allāh, upon a light of guidance from Allāh, fearing Allāh's punishment.”

Jami' al-Ulum wa-al-Hikam (149)

So it encompasses intention, following the Sunnah, hope and fear, doing as many good deeds as we can, and keeping away from as much Haram as we can. These are the aspects which bring Barakah into peoples lives.

We need to strive to achieve Barakah in every action we do and this is something unique to Islam. No productivity book mentions the factor of Barakah.

A Comprehensive Hadith

Chapter Two

Abu Hurayra رضي الله عنه said that the Prophet ﷺ said:

1 **الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ احْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَتْ كَذَا وَكَذَا . وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ فَإِنَّ لَوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ**

“A strong believer is better and is more beloved to Allāh than a weak believer, and there is good in both. Seek that which gives you benefit, and seek help from Allāh and do not feel helpless. If anything affects you, don't say: If only I had done such-and-such, it would been like this and that, but say: It is the decree of Allāh and He does what He wills; for saying 'if only' opens up the actions of the devil.”

Sahih Muslim 2664

1 **Developing one’s Iman**

Developing one’s belief and Iman should be every Muslim’s main priority as the one with strong Iman is a strong believer. At the same time, one should make sure that they take care of their body in order to worship Allah with full conviction.

2 **Keenness to look for what will benefit you**

Being keen is a must have attitude and mindset which must then be followed up with hard work. This includes being keen to take maximum benefit from your time whether it is in the Dunya or the Aakhirah.

3 **Seeking the help of Allāh at all times**

You cannot be productive without Allāh's help and everything else is just a cause. Not asking for Allah’s help, even if one has the ability to do the thing, will cause them to be unsuccessful.

A poet said:

إِذَا تَمَنَيْتُ بِتُّ اللَّيْلَ مُغْتَبِطًا إِنَّ الْمُنَى رَأْسُ أَمْوَالِ الْمَفَالِيسِ

**When I wish for something, I spend the night in joy;
for dreams are the capital of the bankrupt**

One should combine both, Asking Allah for help, and working towards the goal as that is the meaning of true Tawakkul; Seeking the help of Allah and working hard should go hand in hand.

4 **Maintaining a positive attitude no matter what**

This comes from knowing Allāh, His names and attributes, and having faith in the Divine Decree. Success is acknowledged as a gift from Allāh, and failure is seen as a beneficial lesson to learn from. Only a person who knows Allah’s names and attributes, and understands the wisdoms that are present in Al-Qada’a and Al-Qadr will be able to maintain a positive attitude.

Times and Situations When Your Du'a Is Accepted

Chapter Three

Du'a is one of the most powerful tools that we have to boost our productivity. There are many times and situations in which it is accepted. This includes between the Athan and Iqamah, during the Sujood in prayer (and the prayer in general), when the rain falls, the last period of time on a Friday, and in the last third of the night before Fajr. It also includes situations like being a person who is fasting, a traveller, having been wronged by others, or being in a state of hardship and need.

Learning how to make Du'a, its etiquettes, and how to take advantage of these times and situations, is from the greatest ways to boost your productivity.

'Abdullāh ibn Salām رضي الله عنه narrated:

- 1 قُلْتُ وَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - جَالِسٌ إِنَّا لَنَجِدُ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فِي يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ سَاعَةً لَا يُؤَافِقُهَا عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ يُصَلِّي يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ فِيهَا شَيْئًا إِلَّا قَضَى لَهُ حَاجَتَهُ . قَالَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ فَأَشَارَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - أَوْ بَعْضِ سَاعَةٍ . فَقُلْتُ صَدَقْتَ أَوْ بَعْضِ سَاعَةٍ . قُلْتُ أَيُّ سَاعَةٍ هِيَ قَالَ " هِيَ آخِرُ سَاعَةٍ مِنْ سَاعَاتِ النَّهَارِ " قُلْتُ إِنَّهَا لَيْسَتْ سَاعَةً صَلَاةٍ . قَالَ " بَلَى إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا صَلَّى ثُمَّ جَلَسَ لَا يَحْبِسُهُ إِلَّا الصَّلَاةُ فَهُوَ فِي صَلَاةٍ

I said, when the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was sitting: ‘We find in the Book of Allāh that on Friday there is an hour when no believing slave performs prayer and asks Allāh for anything at that time, but Allāh will fulfill his need.’ ‘Abdullah said: “The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) pointed to me, saying: ‘Or some part of an hour.’ I said: ‘you are right, or some part of an hour.’ I said: ‘What time is that?’ He said: ‘It is the last hours of the day.’ I said: ‘It is not the time of the prayer?’ He said: ‘Yes (it is so), when a believing slave performs prayer and then sits with nothing but the prayer keeping him, he is still in a state of prayer”

Sunan Ibn Majah

Jaabir رضي الله عنه said regarding praying in the last third of the night that the Prophet ﷺ said:

- 2 إِنَّ فِي اللَّيْلِ لَسَاعَةً لَا يُؤَافِقُهَا رَجُلٌ مُسْلِمٌ يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ خَيْرًا مِنْ أَمْرِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ إِيَّاهُ وَذَلِكَ كُلُّ لَيْلَةٍ

“There is a time during the night in which no Muslim individual asks Allāh for good in this world and the next without His giving it to him; and that applies to every night.”

Sahih Muslim 757

One needs to make sure they learn the proper etiquettes of how to make Du'a and utilise the times when Du'a is likely to be accepted. One can increase their productivity exponentially by learning these etiquettes.

Words of Remembrance

Chapter Four

Remembering Allāh is from the greatest means to boost productivity. There are specific times and situations in which certain Athkar have been prescribed, as well as the general Athkar which can be said at any time. The book Hisn-ul-Muslim is a great resource for anyone looking to learn these Athkar.

The Athkar of the morning and evening are among the most powerful causes of productivity in one’s day and night. An example is to say this after Fajr prayer.

1 أَصْبَحْنَا وَأَصْبَحَ الْمُلْكُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ ، فَتَحَهُ ، وَنَصْرَهُ ، وَنُورَهُ وَبَرَكَتَهُ ، وَهُدَاهُ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا فِيهِ وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهُ

"We have entered a new day and with it all the dominion which belongs to Allāh, Lord of all that exists. O Allāh, I ask You for the goodness of this day, its victory, its help, its light, its blessings, and its guidance. I seek refuge in You from the evil that is in it, and from the evil that follows it."

Abu Dawud 5084

And in the evening, the wording is slightly different:

2 أَمْسَيْنَا وَأَمْسَى الْمُلْكُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ ، فَتَحَهَا ، وَنَصْرَهَا ، وَنُورَهَا وَبَرَكَتَهَا ، وَهُدَاهَا ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا فِيهَا وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهَا

(The translation is the same however the wording is different to accommodate ‘evening’ versus ‘morning’)

Another example is to look for supplications that ward off evil things which can affect one’s productivity and below is an example of one.

3 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ، وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

"O Allāh! I seek refuge with You from worry and grief, from helplessness and laziness, from cowardice and miserliness, from being heavily in debt and from being overpowered by (other) men."

Abu Dawud 1555

Another Thikr which a person can make during difficult times is:

4 اللَّهُمَّ لَا سَهْلَ إِلَّا مَا جَعَلْتَهُ سَهْلًا، وَأَنْتَ تَجْعَلُ الْحَزْنَ إِذَا شِئْتَ سَهْلًا

"O Allāh, there is no ease except for what you make easy; and you make sorrow, if you wish, easy."

Hisn Al Muslim 139

These are just a few examples from Hisn-ul-Muslim. One can find numerous supplications from the Quran and Sunnah and keep using them on a daily basis.

Waking up Early

Chapter Five

1

Getting up Early and Working From Sunrise

Ṣakhr ibn Wadaa'ah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

1

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَأُمَّتِي فِي بُكُورِهَا». قَالَ: وَكَانَ إِذَا بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً أَوْ جَيْشًا بَعَثَهُمْ فِي أَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ وَكَانَ صَخْرٌ رَجُلًا تاجِرًا وَكَانَ يَبْعَثُ تِجَارَتَهُ فِي أَوَّلِ النَّهَارِ فَأَثْرَى وَأَصَابَ مَالًا

"O Allāh, bless my ummah in the early morning!" He used to, if he was sending out an army or a detachment of soldiers, send them out at the very beginning of the day. Ṣakhr was a businessman and he used to send out his business at the very beginning of the day, and he became rich and attained wealth."

Ibn Hibban

This is a major way to boost your productivity. Do your most important tasks for the day right after Sunrise. This time is also suited for tasks related to the Hereafter as well and an example of that is memorising the Quran. This shows that the most blessed time to work is in the early morning hours.

2

The Prayer as a Means to Boost Productivity

The daily prayers are an immense source of blessings, and a major reason for being productive and the evidence is that Allāh ﷻ said:

1

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

"O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allāh is with the patient."

Surah Al Baqara: 153

The prayer is also a means of rest and recuperation, and a chance to reset your mind and get a fresh approach to your problems. This is from the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ as he said to Bilal رضي الله عنه :

2

أَرِحْنَا بِهَا يَا بِلَالُ

"Relax us with [the call to start the prayer], O Bilaal!"

Abu Dawud 4986

Likewise it is narrated from Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه :

3

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا حَزَبَهُ أَمْرٌ صَلَّى

When anything distressed the Prophet (ﷺ), he prayed.

Abu Dawud 1319

Finally, the prayer is a means of seeking help and making Du'a. There are times in the prayer where a person can make Du'a. Abu Hurayra رضي الله عنه reported:

4

وَحَدَّثَنَا هَارُونُ بْنُ مَعْرُوفٍ، وَعَمْرُو بْنُ سَوَادٍ، قَالَا حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ وَهْبٍ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْحَارِثِ، عَنْ عُمَارَةَ بْنِ غَزِيَّةَ، عَنْ سُمَيٍّ، مَوْلَى أَبِي بَكْرٍ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَا صَالِحٍ، ذَكَوَانَ يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ فَأَكْثَرُوا الدُّعَاءَ "

"The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state)."

Sahih Muslim 482

High Aspirations

Chapter Six

Al-Bukharí رحمته الله narrated from Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said:

1 فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَسَلُّوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ، فَإِنَّهُ أَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَفَوْقَهُ عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَمِنْهُ تَفَجَّرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ

“So, if you ask Allāh, ask him for al-Firdaws, for it is the best of Paradise, and the highest of Paradise, and from it gush forth the rivers of Paradise”

Sahih Al Bukhari 7423

This is all about high aspirations so if you ask Allah, then ask Him for the best of Jannah. One should not make this world his ultimate goal and concern, but rather they should have high aspirations when it comes to the Hereafter. People should keep in mind that what they pursue in this world should serve the religion, not harm it. Many people fall into the traps of Shaytan by making this world their ultimate goal. Hence one should be careful in these matters.

Al-Junayd رحمته الله said:

2 ما طلب أحدٌ شيئاً بجدٍّ وصدقٍ إلا ناله ، فإن لم يَنلْهُ كلُّه نال بعضه.

"Nobody seeks something with dedication and truthfulness except that he will achieve it; even if he doesn't achieve all of it, he will achieve some of it."

Silsilat Al Himma Al Muqaddam

One must have dedication, truthfulness, hard work, and high aspirations.

Ibn-ul-Qayyim رحمته الله said:

3 إذا طلع نجم الهمة في ظلام ليل البطالة، ورَدِفَه قمرُ العزيمة، أشرقت الأرض بنور ربِّها

“If the star of aspiration rises in the darkness of the night of idleness, and this is combined with the moon of dedication, the earth will be lit up with the light of its Lord.”

Al-Fawaid (51)

Continuous Habits

Chapter Seven

From the habits that we are told about in Islam and from the ways to boost our productivity is to develop continuous habits.

Allāh ﷻ commanded the prophet ﷺ in the Quran:

1

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ

"So when you have finished, then [immediately] stand up."

Surah Ash-Sharh: 7

There are various interpretations of this Ayah and from them, “when you have finished your worldly duties, immediately stand up for worship,” and “when you have finished one act of worship, immediately stand up and start another.”

‘Aa’ishah narrated:

2

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ سُئِلَ أَيُّ الْعَمَلِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ: «أَدْوَمُهُ وَإِنْ قَلَّ

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was asked about the act most pleasing to Allāh. He replied: "That which is done continuously, even if it is small."

Sahih Muslim 782b

This shows us the importance of positive habits, having a routine, and having the mindset of not taking a break from worship.

Imām Aḥmad رحمته الله was asked:

3

متى يجد العبد طعم الراحة؟

When will a person find rest?

He replied:

عند أول قدم تَضَعُها في الجنة

when you take your first foot in Paradise.

Al-Maqsad Al-Arshad (2/398)

Striving for Excellence & Combining Multiple Actions

Chapter Eight

1 ● Striving for Excellence

From the means that Islam gives us to boost our productivity is striving for excellence. Shaddād ibn Aws رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

1

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَإِذَا قَتَلْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الْقِتْلَةَ وَإِذَا ذَبَحْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الذَّبْحَ...
"Indeed Allāh has enjoined excellence in everything. So, if you kill, then kill with excellence; and if you slaughter, slaughter with excellence..."

Sahih Muslim 1955

The Prophet ﷺ gave an example from the worldly life which is the slaughtering of an animal. This Hadith shows that if we want to be productive in our worldly affairs, we must strive to complete everything with excellence. This encompasses proper focus, taking care of work, and completing tasks to a standard which exceeds expectations. The productivity boost that we get from that is amazing.

2 ● Combining Multiple Actions

Shaykh Salih Al Usaymi رحمته الله mentioned:

1

وَبَلَغَتْ بِهِمُ الْحَالُ أَنْ يُقْرَأَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَالُ الْأَكْلِ؛ فَلَقَدْ كَانَ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ الْبُلْقَاسِيُّ - الْمَتَوَفَى عَنْ ثَمَانِيَةِ وَعَشْرِينَ سَنَةً - يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ فِي حَالِ أَكْلِهِ؛ خَوْفًا مِنْ ضِيَاعِ وَقْتِهِ فِي غَيْرِهَا، فَكَانَ أَصْحَابُهُ يَقْرَأُونَ عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ يَتَنَاوَلُ مَأْكَلَهُ وَمَشْرَبَهُ.

“The situation reached to such an extent with them that they would be read to while eating, as Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān al-Balqāsī, who died at the age of twenty-eight, used to have the different recitations of the Qur’ān read to him while he was eating, out of fear of wasting time with something else. His companions used to read to him while he was taking his food and drink.”

Ta’dhim Al ‘ilm

2

بَلْ كَانَ يُقْرَأُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَهُمْ فِي دَارِ الْخَلَاءِ؛ فَكَانَ ابْنُ تَيْمِيَّةَ الْجَدُّ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ إِذَا دَخَلَ الْخَلَاءَ لِقَضَاءِ حَاجَةٍ قَالَ لِبَعْضٍ مِنْ حَوْلِهِ: «اقْرَأْ فِي هَذَا الْكِتَابِ، وَارْفَعْ صَوْتَكَ».

More than that, they used to be read to while they were in the area of land for relieving themselves. The elder Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy on him) used to go to the area of land for relieving himself, he would say to those around him: "Read from this book and raise your voice."

Lessons From the Biographies of Those Before You

Chapter Nine

The attention to time the following people (may Allāh have mercy on them) gave shows how they reached milestones that the human civilisation all together has never reached.

- 1** An-Nawawí رحمه الله used to have twelve lessons with his teachers every day.
- 2** Ash-Shawkānī رحمه الله , the author of Nayl al-Awtār, used to have thirteen lessons over a single day and night, among which were lessons that he took from his teachers, and lessons that his students took from him.
- 3** Māḥmood al-Aloosí رحمه الله , The author of a book of Tafseer, exceeded them as he used to study twenty-four lessons in one day, and when he became busy with Tafseer and giving Fatāwā, he reduced it to thirteen.
- 4** In the biography of Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Jamā'ah رحمه الله , it is mentioned that his lessons across a single day and night reached around fifty.
- 5** Ibn at-Tabbān رحمه الله studied al-Mudawwanah around one thousand times, and that is found in some of the books of 'Abbās ibn al-Fārisi رحمه الله in his own writing, "I studied this a thousand times."
- 6** Ghālib ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān, better known as Ibn 'Aṭiyyah رحمه الله , father of the famous scholar of Tafseer, studied Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhārī seven hundred times.
- 7** Aḥmad ibn 'Abd-ud-Dā'im al-Maqdisí رحمه الله , one of the scholars from the Ḥanbalí school, wrote two thousand volumes with his own hand. Ibn Al Jawzi رحمه الله also wrote the same amount of volumes.
- 8** Ibn-ul-Jawzī رحمه الله , as a student, read twenty thousand volumes.
- 9** The number of teachers of Abū Sa'd as-Sam'ānī رحمه الله reached seven thousand. Ibn an-Najjār رحمه الله said in Thayl Tāreekh Baghdād, "This is something that nobody else reached."
- 10** This is the vast amount that they heard and read from their Shuyookh, both extensive works and smaller works. It might well have reached thousands of works, as in the case of Ibn as-Sam'ānī رحمه الله mentioned above, and his companion Ibn 'Asākir رحمه الله .
- 11** A number of scholars are mentioned to have authored a thousand works. From them are 'Abdul-Malik ibn Ḥabeeb رحمه الله , the scholar of Andalus, and Abūl-Faraj Ibn-ul-Jawzī رحمه الله .



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